REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-24 are pending in the present application. In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Bunnell (U.S. Patent No. 6,119,122). The rejection of these claims is respectfully traversed.

Applicant acknowledges with gratitude the courtesy extended by Examiner Al-Hashemi and Primary Examiner Amsbury in granting a personal interview with Applicant's representative on July 1, 2003. During the course of this interview, the Bunnell reference was discussed, as were the rejected claims. Additionally, "state attributes" were discussed.

Claims 2-4,7-9, 12-14, and 17-19 have been amended to clarify state attributes. Claims 21-24 have further been amended to clarify an example of a "layered hierarchically organized database" (See, e.g., specification, page 3, lines 8-9). No new matter is added by this amendment.

Attention is first directed to the rejection of Claim 1 as anticipated by Bunnell. Claim 1 recites a method for managing a plurality of nodes in a layered hierarchically organized database stored in a server on a computer network comprising accessing a subset of said nodes in response to a client request; modifying one or more state attributes associated with said nodes to control merging and updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database in response to said client request; and managing said nodes using said state attributes.

According to the Examiner, "modifying one or more state attributes associated with said nodes to control merging and updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database in response to said client request" is disclosed by Bunnell at col. 7, lines 1-5 and at col. 7, lines 25-

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30. Applicants respectfully submit that there is no mention or suggestion of modifying state attributes associated with nodes in a layered hierarchically organized database in these cited portions of <u>Bunnell</u>. Rather, these portions of <u>Bunnell</u> mention partitions having master replicas which can be accessed by clients to make structural changes such as splitting and combining partitions or creating and removing replicas, and point out that the distributed directory is a loosely synchronized database, and that an update made at one replica does not appear instantaneously at other replicas.

Additionally, the Examiner states that "managing said nodes using said state attributes" is disclosed by <u>Bunnell</u> at col. 6, lines 8-10. Applicants respectfully submit that there is no mention or suggestion of managing nodes in a layered hierarchically organized database using state attributes associated with the nodes in this cited portion of <u>Bunnell</u>. Rather, this cited portion of <u>Bunnell</u> discloses that the structure of the distributed directory is governed by a schema, and that the schema defines the rules for adding and managing objects and attributes of objects in the distributed directory.

Applicants respectfully submit that <u>Bunnell</u> does not disclose or suggest "modifying one or more state attributes associated with said nodes to control merging and updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database in response to said client request" or "managing said nodes using said state attributes" as recited by Claim 1. Rather, <u>Bunnell</u> discloses a method and apparatus for generically viewing and editing values and attributes of distributed directory objects. As stated in <u>Bunnell</u> (Col. 3, lines 34-50):

> Still another aspect of the present invention is a user interface for representing in a
> computer system at least a portion of a distributed directory. The distributed
> directory has a hierarchy of objects, each of the objects having at least one
> attribute with an associated value. A set of object representations are displayed in
> a relationship to one another for representing the hierarchy of objects for at least a
> portion of the distributed directory. Each object representation corresponds to one

or more objects in the distributed directory. A plurality of attribute representations are displayed in a tree structure. Each of the attribute representations correspond to one or more attributes of the distributed directory object corresponding to an object representation. One or more value representations are displayed relative to an attribute representation. The value representations correspond to the associated values of the attribute corresponding to the attribute representation.
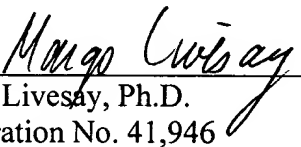
Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is allowable over <u>Bunnell</u>. With respect to Claims 2-5, these claims depend from Claim 1, and are therefore patentable, at least for the same reason.

For reasons stated above with respect to Claim 1, Applicants submit that independent Claims 6, 11, and 16 are allowable over <u>Bunnell</u>. With respect to Claims 7-10, 12-15, 17-20, and 21-24, these claims depend from Claims 6, 11, and 16, respectively, and are therefore patentable, at least for the same reason.

In view of the foregoing comments, Applicants respectfully submit that the present amendment places the above-referenced application in condition for allowance, and thus, a swift allowance is respectfully requested so that the application may swiftly pass to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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